

TCCNS Database Site | Texas A&M University-Commerce | P.O. Box 3011 | Commerce, TX 75429 | 903-886-5076 | Fax: 903-468-3261

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Institutions	
Taxonomy	Perhaps the most surprising aspects of the Texas Common Course Numbering System during the development process was that it was completely voluntary and not mandated by state government in Texas.
TCCNS Online Matrix	
ACGM	TCCNS arose as a grass-roots cooperative effort among junior/community colleges and universities. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and its staff have provided advisory support as TCCNS grew from an idea in the mid-1970s to a regional consortium in the late 1980s to a statewide organization in the early 1990s, but colleges and universities themselves are principally responsible for the emergence of the TCCNS.
History	
Board	
Forms	
Guidelines For TCCNS	<p>1973-1975: TACRAO's Uniform Course Numbering Model</p> <p>The idea which has evolved into the TCCNS began in November 1973 when the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) appointed a committee to study the feasibility of a uniform course numbering system for all postsecondary institutions in Texas.</p> <p>The committee, chaired by UT-Arlington registrar Zack Prince, proposed a course taxonomy consisting of a 2-, 3-, or 4-character alphabetic prefix designating academic discipline and a 4- or 5-digit course number designating level, credit value, and sequence.</p> <p>In November 1975 Dr. Bevington Reed, then Commissioner of Higher Education, forwarded a copy of the committee's final report to the president of each institution in Texas and requested comments. Response, however, indicated that implementation of such a system on a statewide basis was not feasible at that time.</p> <p>Nevertheless, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, many institutions changed their course numbering systems in response to growing course inventories and computerization of student records. In the process, many adopted the general form of the proposed TACRAO model, though without coordinating their course numbers with those of other institutions.</p> <p>1987-1989: The Gulf Coast Consortium</p> <p>Recognizing a high rate of student transfer among their campuses, the presidents of the nine junior/community colleges in the Texas Gulf Coast Community College Consortium appointed a committee to develop a shared numbering system for their institutions.</p> <p>The work of the GCCC committee, chaired by Don Pugh of Brazosport College, spanned the two-year period from August 1987 through October 1989.</p> <p>The committee looked at a number of possible course numbering and articulation arrangements, including the California and Florida models. They finally settled on the basic numbering structure previously proposed by TACRAO, but tied the new course designations to the Coordinating Board's Academic Course Guide Manual to provide a common point of reference for course content, credit value, and sequencing. By 1989, all nine junior/community colleges in the Gulf Coast Consortium had committed to the new numbering system.</p> <p>1990-1992: The Coordinating Board & TACRAO</p> <p>In 1990 the Coordinating Board appointed a committee to revise the <i>ACGM</i>. Part of the committee's charge was "to review the feasibility of establishing a common numbering system for the first two years of lower-division coursework in junior/community colleges and universities." The committee recommended that a common course numbering system or a state equivalency table should be developed covering freshman and sophomore level coursework at both junior/community colleges and universities.</p> <p>The Coordinating Board accepted the committee's report in January 1991 and Dr. Kenneth Ashworth, Commissioner of Higher Education, asked TACRAO president John Edwards for assistance in determining the feasibility of a statewide common course numbering system. Dr. Edwards appointed a Task Force, co-chaired by Dale Hardgrove of San Jacinto College and Zack Prince of UT-Arlington, to work on the project.</p> <p>In a parallel action, Texas A&M University-Commerce (formerly East Texas State University) hosted a Common Course Numbering Conference in April 1991, bringing together representatives from 15 junior/community colleges and 5 universities in north and northeast Texas. Representatives from the</p>

Gulf Coast Consortium shared their experience with the group. As a result of this and a subsequent meeting in June, most of the junior/community colleges in the region chose to convert their course numbers to what was renamed the Texas Common Course Numbering System. Additionally, Texas A&M University-Commerce and Stephen F. Austin State University agreed to list Common Numbers parenthetically in their catalogs alongside their regular course numbers.

The success of these first meetings in east Texas prompted similar meetings in other regions of the state. The Texas Public Meetings/Junior College Association discussed the project at their summer 1991 conference; as a result, further regional meetings were set up under joint TACRAO and TPCJCA sponsorship throughout the state hosted at Victoria College, Texas Tech University, McLennan Community College, Tarrant County Junior College, and San Jacinto College.

These regional meetings succeeded in persuading institutions to join the project, owing mostly, perhaps, to two factors. First, no commitment was asked of institutional representatives up front; they were asked merely to consider Common Numbering as a possibility. Second, when representatives arrived at the regional meetings they found much of their potential work had already been done for them: the TACRAO Task Force had already drawn up equivalency tables for the lower-division courses offered at the representatives' institutions. While these tables were only speculative on the part of the Task Force and would require scrutiny and approval from the participating institutions, they were a tangible demonstration that Common Numbering could be accomplished.

1992-1993: Statewide Acceptance of TCCNS & Independent Status of TCCNS

The work of the TACRAO Task Force, combined with the regional meetings, provided an impetus for rapid statewide growth of Common Numbering. To date, 118 institutions participate in the TCCNS. This number includes all public junior/community college districts, all public universities, all state technical college campuses, 21 private institutions, and three health science education institutions.

In November 1992 the Task Force recommended to the TACRAO Executive Committee that an independent governing board be established for the ongoing management and operation of the TCCNS. The recommendation was approved and the newly-constituted TCCNS Board convened for the first time in February 1993. In October of that year the Board published the first Course Matrix, the master list of all Common Courses offered at participating TCCNS institutions statewide.

1993-present: TCCNS Transfer Guides & the Internet

In the winter of 1993-94, the TCCNS Board and the Coordinating Board's *Standing Committee on Lower-Division General Academic & Transfer Issues* began jointly exploring new methods for universities to use in making their TCCNS course equivalencies and Transfer Guides available to every community college student in Texas.

Because the statewide TCCNS Matrix existed in electronic form, the first thought was to distribute it on diskette to institutions. This idea, however, presented three obstacles:

- the size of the Matrix soon would exceed the capacity of conventional magnetic media;
- the Matrix would need to be made available in multiple formats to accommodate various computer platforms and/or database software;
- the logistics of physically distributing revisions to the Matrix would be equally cumbersome in either electronic or hardcopy format.

CD-ROM was briefly considered but rejected, because the format solved only the first of these three problems.

The joint committee settled upon the Internet as the ideal medium. Online publication of TCCNS information allows the widest instantaneous public distribution, while maintenance and control of the documents and their contents remain with the publishing institutions. The University of Minnesota's Gopher was chosen as TCCNS's preferred application because (at the time) it was the prevailing Internet protocol.

In summer 1994 the joint committee solicited all TCCNS-participating 4-year institutions, hoping perhaps 5-10 would agree to participate in a pilot project of online Transfer Guides. To the committee's surprise, almost all universities agreed. Two workshops, in Dallas and Austin, were held in fall 1994 to explain the project and demonstrate several model Guides already posted to the `net by UT-Austin. The Coordinating Board agreed to add a directory to their Gopher to serve as a statewide central hub for TCCNS Transfer Guides.

In fall 1995, concurrent with the publication of its second hardcopy edition, the [TCCNS Matrix](#) itself became available online, hosted by Texas A&M University-Commerce on their Gopher server and maintained there by Rebecca Anderson.

In 1996 the TCCNS Board anticipates expanding the agreed-upon Internet protocols to include the Hyper-Text Markup Language (HTML), so that institutions can post their TCCNS Transfer Guides

and course equivalencies as World Wide Web pages. Other protocols (Acrobat, Java, Telnet, etc.) will be considered as well, in order to provide participating institutions as many options as possible to suit their online publishing needs.

In the summer of 2000, the TCCNS directory information and Matrix 2000 were made available online at a new website address, www.tccns.org. The website includes links to the participating member institutions/and the Coordinating Board's Lower Division Academic Course Guide manual.

The online Matix was reconstructed in the fall of 2003. The database of the 2002-2003 matrix was made searchable by institution, course number, former community college numbers, and for comparison of institutional inventories.

Changes to the Texas Education Code (78th Legislature) required the formal adoption of a common numbering system for higher education institutions in Texas. Pursuant to the legislative change, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board adopted a new rule May, 2004.

The new rule requires universities to provide TCCNS numbers in their printed and electronic catalogues.

Each institution should comply with the requirement no later than September 1, 2005.